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Consideration of effective measures to enhance the protection, security and safety of diplomatic and consular missions and representatives

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Letter dated 4 May 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I wish to draw your attention to a recent national court decision, which concerns international terrorism and the subject matter of a series of General Assembly resolutions under the heading "Consideration of effective measures to enhance the protection, security and safety of diplomatic and consular missions and representatives", the latest of which is General Assembly resolution 55/149 of 12 December 2000.

As over 30 Turkish diplomats have been killed by Armenian terrorists to date, it is with some consolation that I report that the United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio sentenced Armenian activist and former Chairman of the Armenian National Committee of America, Mourad Topalian, to 37 months of imprisonment separately for two counts of terrorism-linked federal crimes. Specifically, Topalian was convicted of storing over 100 pounds of high explosives and possessing machine-guns (see *United States v. Mourad Topalian*, Case No. 1:99 CR 358).

United States federal authorities connected Topalian to at least four incidents of terrorism in the United States: the bombing at the United Nations Plaza on 12 October 1980; the bombing at the Los Angeles Orange County Convention Center on 3 June 1981; the bombing at the Turkish Consulate in Beverly Hills on 20 November 1981; and the attempted bombing and assassination of the Honorary Turkish Consul General in Philadelphia on 22 October 1982.

The ultra-nationalist Armenian terrorist group, Justice Commandos of the Armenian Genocide (JCAG), claimed responsibility for each of the aforementioned attacks. According to United States federal authorities, JCAG is the military wing of the Dashnak Party in Yerevan, Armenia, whose representative organ in the United States is the Armenian Revolutionary Front (ARF), based in Boston. The Armenian

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National Committee of America, of which Topalian was Chairman until his arrest, is an affiliate of ARF and the Dashnak Party. As stated by United States federal authorities, JCAG recruited militants from the Armenian Youth Federation, based in Lexington, Massachusetts. Within this network of organizations, Mourad Topalian is claimed to have served as the overlord to several cells of young Armenian militants.

The car bombing on 12 October 1980 at the United Nations Plaza, which was condemned as "savage and calculated terrorism" by the then United States Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Donald McHenry, wounded five innocent people and caused substantial property damage to several buildings, including the Turkish Center (a building which houses the Turkish Mission to the United Nations, the Turkish Consulate and a Turkish American community cultural facility), the B'nai B'rith Building, Chase Manhattan Bank and the African-American Center.

The long and difficult task of bringing Topalian to justice underscores the elusiveness of international terrorism and the complexity of a single act of terrorism. In the plea agreement, convicted criminal Topalian admitted that in 1976, when he was the Chairman of the Armenian National Committee of America, an affiliate of Dashnak Party in Armenia, he contacted an associate in Michigan and asked that person to obtain explosives and firearms, including fully automatic firearms. That person then made arrangements for two other individuals to steal explosives from a geological mining site near Kalkaska, Michigan. In July 1976, those individuals stole a range of high explosive materials from an explosive magazine located at a drilling site near Kalkaska, Michigan. In the fall of 1976, Topalian ordered other operatives to ship half of the stolen batch of explosives to him in the Cleveland area. In October 1980, Topalian directed another individual to rent a storage unit in Bedford, Ohio, using false identification. From October 1980 to 13 September 1996, Topalian and others kept the explosives, blasting caps and self-detonating explosive device in the said storage unit. In the summer of 1976, Topalian also acquired two machine-guns and kept them in the same storage unit from October 1980 to 13 September 1996.

The explosive material used in the United Nations Plaza bombing was linked to the explosive material stored by Topalian and his operatives in Bedford, Ohio. Approximately 100 of the one-pound canisters, as well as blasting caps and dynamites, remained, partly decomposed, in the said storage unit in Bedford until they were discovered in 1996. As noted in the Government's memorandum in aid of sentencing, "even an accidental detonation of the Bedford explosives would have been approximately 20 times the size of the Turkish Mission blast". For 16 years, the children in the day-care centre across the street, the children on the playground at the school next door, the commuters on the highway just 300 feet away, the customers and gasoline tanker drivers at the nearby gas station, and countless residents in the surrounding neighbourhood were dangerously within the potential blast area.

Mourad Topalian's activities within the Armenian terror network served an important role in a larger terrorism campaign, which from 1973 to date has included over 235 acts of terrorism and claimed 70 killings, 41 attempted killings and 524 woundings. Armenian terrorism has taken 105 civilian hostages, "executing" 12. The Armenian terrorist bombing campaign, in which Mourad Topalian was also involved, included at least 160 bomb attacks and accounted for the vast majority of

deaths and woundings since the bombings were generally committed in crowded public areas, such as airports, city squares and shopping malls. These bombings caused property destruction in the United States, Europe, the Middle East and Australia, totalling hundreds of millions of dollars. Armenian violence against Turkish diplomats, people of Turkish descent and many others who do not accept the ultra-nationalist Armenian view of World War I history has been senseless and cruel. Topalian showed no remorse at his sentencing hearing. Instead, he rallied his 200 supporters at the court-house to continue the campaign. The Armenian National Committee of America, of which Mourad Topalian was the Chairman, has never condemned this terrorism.

The said chain of events, the criminal acts and the subsequent sentencing once more demonstrate the serious problem of international terrorism, including the attacks against diplomatic and consular missions.

Acts of terrorism not only endanger or take the lives of diplomatic and consular representatives and impede their normal work but also pose a threat to the very public among whom terrorists so casually operate.

The Government of the Republic of Turkey, therefore once again calls on all States to take all necessary measures at the national and international levels to prevent any act of terrorism against diplomatic and consular representatives and missions, to prosecute or extradite those who perpetrate such acts, and to bring as promptly as possible the offender to justice.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter would be distributed as a document of the fifty-fifty session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 156 and 164, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ümit **Pamir**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative